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THE GREEK TRADE-ROUTES  
TO BRITAIN.

BY  
PROFESSOR W. RIDGEWAY.

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## THE GREEK TRADE-ROUTES TO BRITAIN.

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NO subject has had more attraction for inquirers into the early history of these islands than the question of the earliest intercourse between Britain and the ancient peoples of the Mediterranean, to whom all the civilisation of Europe is due. Camden, the Father of English Archæology, identified the Cassiterides of the ancients with the Scilly Isles, and gave currency to the belief, which has prevailed ever since, that the Phœnicians traded to Britain. Mr. Elton (*Origins of English History*) has given good reasons for doubting this hypothesis, and has shown that the Tin Islands of the ancient writers are rather a group of small islands off the coast of Northern Spain.

But we can have no doubt that there was an extensive trade between Gaul and Britain before Julius Cæsar ever set foot on this island. The nature of this trade in general we learn from Strabo; for it is not likely that there had been great variation in the nature of the objects exported and imported between 55 B.C. and the time when the geographer wrote (*cir.* A.D. I-19). Strabo (iv, 199) enumerates corn (wheat, *σῖτος*), cattle, gold, silver, iron, skins, slaves, and dogs, used by the Kelts for war as well as the chase, and gives us likewise the list of imports into Britain, which comprised "ivory bracelets and necklaces, and red amber beads (*λυγγούρια*) and vessels of glass (*ὑαλᾶ σκεύη*), and such like trumpery wares (*ἄλλος ῥῶπος τοιοῦτος*)."  
Strangely enough, Strabo omits tin from his schedule of products and exports, although elsewhere, as we shall see, he quotes a passage from Posidonius referring to that trade, and Cæsar mentions it amongst the products of Britain as being found in the interior (*in mediterraneis regionibus*, B. G.,

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v, 12). It is quite possible, as we shall see hereafter, that the tin trade with the Continent had died out in the time of Cæsar, and that it was not until after the Roman conquest, in the middle of the following century, that the mines of Cornwall were again developed. To the list of imports given by Strabo we may add copper, on the authority of Cæsar (*ære utuntur importato*, v, 12). Diodorus Siculus (v, 22) gives an account of the tin mining in Cornwall, which is probably based on the account of the Stoic Posidonius, who travelled in Britain about B.C. 90:

"The inhabitants of that part of Britain which is called Belerion are very fond of strangers, and, from their intercourse with foreign merchants, are civilised in their manner of life. They prepare the tin, working very carefully the earth in which it is produced. The ground is rocky, but it contains earthy veins, the produce of which is ground down, smelted, and purified. They beat the metal into masses, shaped like astragali,<sup>1</sup> and carry it to a certain island lying off Britain called Ictis. During the ebb of the tide the intervening space is left dry, and they carry over into this island the tin in abundance in their waggons. Now there is a peculiar phenomenon connected with the neighbouring islands, I mean those that lie between Europe and Britain; for at the flood-tide the intervening passage is overflowed, and they seem like islands; but a large space is left dry at the ebb, and then they seem to be like peninsulas. Here, then, the merchants buy the tin from the natives and carry it over to Gaul; and after travelling overland for about thirty days, they finally bring their loads on horses to the mouth of the Rhone."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ἀπο τυποῦντες δ' εἰς ἀστραγάλων ρυθμοῖς. Var. lect., ἀστραγάλους. As the tin was conveyed on pack-horses, lumps shaped like astragali do not seem very suitable. At Truro and in other Museums there are ancient pigs of tin shaped like saddles, evidently to facilitate carriage. Is ἀστραβῶν the true reading?

<sup>2</sup> It is impossible that τῇν ἐκβαλήν τοῦ Ροδανοῦ ποταμοῦ can mean,

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Next let us take the following passages, both of which are taken from Posidonius. "Posidonius says (in reference to Spain) that the tin is not found on the surface, as many authors have alleged, but is dug up; and that it is produced among the barbarians above Lusitania, and also in the islands called Cassiterides. And that from the British Isles tin is carried to Marseilles" (*Strabo*, iii, 147). Diodorus (v, 38) is beyond doubt quoting from the same authority when he writes: "Tin likewise is found in many parts of Iberia, not being found on the surface, as some have alleged in their accounts, but being dug up and smelted, just like silver and gold. For above the land of the Lusitanians there are many mines of tin along the little islands which lie in front of Iberia in the Ocean, which are called from the circumstance Tin Islands. Much is likewise conveyed across from the British Island to Gaul, which lies right on the opposite side, and is conveyed on horses through the interior of Gaul by the traders to the Massaliotes, and the city called Narbo. The latter is a Roman colony, and, on account of its favourable position and wealth, is the greatest trading centre of all the cities in these parts." These two passages are valuable (as Mr. Elton has pointed out, p. 37) "as showing the distinction which was known to exist between the Cornish tin trade and the commerce with the Cassiterides, which was of a much higher antiquity."

Let us now observe that when Strabo, writing as a contemporary, is describing the exports from Britain, he omits the mention of tin, whilst from the extract from Posidonius, quoted alike by him and Diodorus, it is plain that when the Stoic explorer visited North-Western Europe the British tin trade was still of importance. From the quotation from Diodorus we learn also that the tin passed to two different marts on the Mediterranean littoral, Massalia

as Mr. Elton takes it, "the junction of the Rhone and Sâone, where the wharves for the tin-barges were erected." What is the authority for the last statement?



and then to Narbo. This implies that there were either two distinct routes, or that the tin first passed to Narbo and thence to Massalia. For a glance at the map will show the absurdity of the third alternative, that is, to suppose that the tin passed round by Massalia and then to Narbo. That our first alternative is probably the true one for the epoch when Posidonius wrote, we shall adduce evidence hereafter. On the other hand, it is probable that in earlier times there was only one route, that from Narbo.

The greatest loss which early English history has sustained was the destruction of the *Travels* of Pytheas, that clever Massaliote, whom Polybius and Strabo called the "arch-liar", because he related certain matters connected with the climate and geography of Northern Europe which the modern world knows to be undoubted facts. Pytheas went on a voyage round the west and north of Europe, probably about 330 B.C. What the circumstances were under which the voyage was undertaken we have no means of knowing. The statement that he was sent out by "a committee of merchants" is of course a mere piece of romance, like much more which has been written about his expedition. All that we know about it is contained in a few broken fragments embedded chiefly in the writings of Polybius and Strabo, who quoted him usually for the purpose of holding up his mendacity to execration. One of these quotations is given by Strabo (iv, 190) from Polybius: "The Liger (Loire) debouches between the Pictones and Namnitæ. Formerly Corbilo was an emporium on this river of which Polybius has spoken, when he made mention of the fables told by Pytheas, that none of the Massaliotes who conversed with Scipio could tell anything worth recording, when questioned by Scipio about Britain; nor yet any of those from Narbo, nor of those from Corbilo."

It may be observed that the experience of modern times entirely explains the statement of Pytheas. When we know that it is only within very recent years that we have found out the sources and plants from which some of our

best-known drugs are procured (for instance, it was only in 1867 that that most familiar of drugs, Turkey rhubarb, was discovered by a missionary in Thibet), the jealousy of the Eastern traders having kept the secret so well ; and when we recall the success with which the Arabs until recent years had withheld all information about the interior of Africa, we need not wonder if the shrewd merchants of Marseilles and Narbonne professed an intense ignorance about the land from whence came the tin, the source of which was, no doubt, the object of the Roman inquiries.

But to return : these three towns, called by Pytheas " the best cities in this region", indicate the line of trade to Britain. There are two emporia on the southern, but only one on the western shore of Gaul. From this we may infer with some confidence that as yet the route to Britain across the Straits of Dover was undeveloped, and that the flourishing city of Corbilo, on the mouth of the Loire, probably in the territory of the Namnetes (*Nantes*), and whose name possibly is still found in that of the village of *Couvenron*, was the port of embarkation and debarkation to and from Britain.

This passage is of great importance also in other respects, for it puts beyond all doubt that the route between Mas-salia, Narbo, and the mouth of the Loire was already well known, although a writer of repute like Mr. Elton assumes (on very mistaken grounds, as we shall see presently) that Pytheas opened up this route for the Massaliotes. Furthermore, it can also be inferred, from Scipio's questions, that there was trade with Britain by this route ; whilst there is the further probability that tin was comprised in this trade, although the common theory at present is that Pytheas first opened this trade. Nor is this opinion without further evidence. In none of the Greek fragments of Pytheas have we any reference to tin, but there is a short quotation from Timæus (flor. 350-326 B.C.), the Sicilian historian, who was a contemporary of Pytheas, and whose quotations from the latter are frequently given by Pliny.



It runs as follows: "Timæus the historian says that the island of Mictis is distant inwards from Britain six days' voyage, in which the tin is produced (*proveniat*, others read *veniat*), and that the Britons sail to it in vessels made of wicker-work covered with hide."<sup>1</sup> We shall have to discuss this passage at greater length later on, but for our immediate purpose it is enough to point out that whether Timæus is quoting from Pytheas or not, already in the time of Pytheas the Greeks were aware of the British tin trade. This is supported by a passage in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Book of Wonderful Stories*, which, with others, is regarded as a genuine fragment of Aristotle by Bekker (*Fragm.*, 248). In it we have mention of Keltic tin (τὸν κασσίτερον τὸν Κελτικὸν τήκεοθαί φασι πόλῳ τάχιον τοῦ μολύβδου). If this be really Aristotle's, at first sight we might found on it an argument of considerable force to show that there was a trade in tin across Gaul from Britain before the voyage of Pytheas, especially as it is commonly held that the term Κελτικὴ was confined to that part of Gaul which lay to the north of the Loire. Mr. Elton, for example, builds on this assumption his interpretation of the aim of the explorations of Pytheas. "In a short time," he writes (page 25), they (*i.e.*, Pytheas and his companions) arrived "at the mouth of the Loire, then the northern boundary of the Iberian population and the limit of the Celtic advance. Here Pytheas declared, and was afterwards followed by Artemidorus, that it would have been far easier to have come to Celtica by the overland route from Marseilles than to have undertaken the difficult and tedious voyage by sea."

Even though Mr. Elton's assumption as to Celtica were right, whatever may be the meaning of the famous sentence which he has paraphrased, it certainly cannot be

<sup>1</sup> Timæus historicus a Britannis introrsum sex dierum navigatione abesse dicit insulam Mictim, in qua candidum plumbum proveniat; ad eam Britannos vitilibus navigiis corio circumsutis navigare (Pliny, *H. N.*, iv, 16).

made to give his rendering. The words as given by Strabo (iii, 143) are τὸ προσαρκτικὰ μέρη τῆς Ἰβηρίας εὐπαροδώτερα εἶναι πρὸς τὴν Κελτικὴν ἢ κατὰ τοὺς Ὠκεανὸν πλέουσι. The literal translation of these words is: "The fact that the northerly parts of Iberia are more accessible by a side route in the direction of Keltica than for those sailing by the ocean." Instead of Celtica being the goal aimed at, as Mr. Elton supposes, it is the northern part of Iberia which is the object of the statement. But we may at once dispose of this point by showing from indubitable testimony, drawn from the writings of the age of Pytheas, that the country which the Greeks called Keltiké included all Gaul down to the Pyrenees, and even some parts of Spain. Aristotle (*Meteor*, i, 350), speaking of the Pyrenees, describes them as mountains in Keltiké—ἐκ δὲ τῆς Πυρρήνης (τοῦτο δ' ἔστι ὄρος πρὸς δυσμὴν ἰσημερίην ἐν τῇ Κελτικῇ) κτλ. He does not merely regard the Pyrenees as bounding Keltiké, but as being actually in it. Aristotle had no doubt good information respecting this region, as is shown by his various references in the *Politics* to the habits and institutions of the Kelts and Iberians, and his evidently complete knowledge of the polity of Massalia. But his testimony is completely confirmed by the historian Ephorus (363-300 B.C.), as we know from Strabo (iv, 199). "Ephorus both speaks of Keltiké as exceeding great in its extent, so that he assigns to them (the Kelts) the greatest part of what is now called Iberia, as far as Gadeira, and he represents the people as lovers of the Greeks, and he is our sole authority for many statements respecting them which do not resemble their present conditions." Aristotle may well speak of the Pyrenees as being in Keltiké, when Ephorus makes that name extend as far south as Cadiz.

The only inference, then, which we are warranted in drawing from the "Keltic tin" is that Aristotle was aware that the tin-supply came from the land of the Kelts, but as that might have, in his mind, included all Northern Spain with the tin islands, it is impossible to base any

argument on it. But even without this the evidence already given makes it very probable that the tin trade with Britain already existed. The tin derived from the Cassiterides could only have reached the Greeks through the medium of the merchantmen of Gades. That ancient city, almost alone of all the Tyrian colonies in the West, had managed to keep free from the yoke of Carthage. It is not improbable that friendly trade relations existed between her and Massalia and her colony Emporiæ. For instance, we find all three employing the same peculiar monetary system ; besides, there was the strong bond of a common hatred and dread of Carthage, who was now almost at the zenith of her power.

By the time of Pytheas the trade of Massalia with Southern Spain and Gades must have been most sensibly hindered. For the Phocaic cities which had once fringed the coast of Spain as far as Malaga (the most southern of which was Mænaca) were falling one by one before the Carthaginians, whose "fleet commanded, without a rival, the whole western Mediterranean". "They endeavoured still more thoroughly to monopolise the maritime commerce of this region at the expense alike of foreigners and of their own subjects, and it was not the wont of the Carthaginians to recoil from any violence that might help forward their purpose. A contemporary of the Punic wars, Eratosthenes, the father of geography (275-194 B.C.), affirms that every foreign mariner sailing towards Sardinia or towards the Straits of Gades, who fell into the hands of the Carthaginians, was thrown by them into the sea ; and with this statement the fact completely accords that Carthage, by the treaty of 348 B.C., declared the Spanish, Sardinian, and Libyan ports open to Roman trading-vessels, whereas by that of 308 B.C. it totally closed them, with the exception of Carthage itself, to the same." (Mommsen, *Roman Hist.*, ii, p. 15.)

Under such circumstances Massaliote trade with Gades must have been indeed fraught with dangers, and it was

natural that the Massalian traders should wish for some safer route by which to obtain the produce from the famous tin islands, the navigation to which the shipmen of Gades kept a close secret, both then and for long after.

Strabo (iii, 178), after having described the situation of the Kassiterides (probably borrowing his accounts from Posidonius, under whose name the paragraph which immediately precedes is given), their number, natural products, and inhabitants—"men clad in sable raiments, with flowing garments down to their feet, girt round the bosom, walking about with staves, resembling the Furies in Tragedy"—proceeds as follows :

"They live like pastoral people from the produce of their flocks, and as they possess mines of tin and lead, in exchange for these and the skins of their flocks they obtain by way of barter pottery and salt and articles of bronze, in dealing with the traders. Formerly the Phœnicians alone used to ply this trade from Gadeires, keeping the way thither a secret from all. And on the Romans following a shipmaster, in order that they too might find out the marts, the shipmaster through rivalry purposely cast away his ship on a shoal, but having enticed likewise those who followed him into the same destruction, he himself escaped by means of the wreck, and received back at the public expense the price of the freight which he had lost.<sup>1</sup> The Romans, nevertheless, by making frequent attempts, succeeded in finding out the way. But when, moreover, Publius Crassus crossed over to visit them, and found the mines being worked at a shallow depth, and the people peaceful, he made it known to those who were already exceeding willing to ply on this sea, although it is greater in extent than that which divides off Britain."

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Elton (p. 13) says the captain "was rewarded by the Senate of Carthage". Strabo's words are simply *δημοσία ἀπέλαβεν*. The mention of Carthage introduces a total misconception of the relations between that city and Gades.

The statement about Publius Crassus<sup>1</sup> is of course not from Posidonius, but is added by Strabo himself. There can be little doubt that this Roman is none other but Cæsar's famous lieutenant who conquered all Aquitania (Cæsar, *B. G.*, iii, 11-20). He is all the more likely to have passed into Northern Spain, inasmuch as the people of that region had given great assistance to the Aquitani in their struggle against him (*B. G.*, iii, 23). Without doubt he was fully aware of the mineral wealth of that country, as is shown by Cæsar's remark (iii, 21) on their skill in defending cities, in consequence of their having numerous copper mines and other works in that region. As is plain from Strabo's words, the Romans already knew how to reach the tin islands by sea, coasting round from the Mediterranean and up from Gades on the old Phœnician track. Crassus, then, by opening up a far shorter route, that of a short sea voyage from the Cassiterides to the coast of Gaul (possibly to the Garonne), at once

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Elton (p. 19) has missed completely both grammar and sense: "Publius Crassus conquered the north-west of Spain about a century before Christ, and found the Cassiterides, the situation of which was not up to that time known to the Romans. 'As soon as he reached them', says Strabo, 'he perceived that the mines were *very slightly worked*, and the natives were peaceable, and already employing their leisure in learning navigation; so he taught all that were willing how to make the voyage, *i.e.*, the voyage from Vigo to Marseilles.' He adds that this passage was longer than the journey to Britain, by which he appears to mean that it was thought worth while to carry the tin round to Marseilles, even though the merchants of that place had an easier way of getting it by the caravan-route across Gaul." Here is the original: ἐπειδὴ δὲ καὶ Πόπλιος Κράσσος διαβὰς ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἔγνων τὰ μέταλλα ἐκ μικροῦ βάθους ὀρυττόμενα, καὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας εἰρηναίους, ἐκ περιουσίας ἤδη τὴν θαλάττην ἐργάζεσθαι ταύτην τοῖς ἐθίλουσιν ἐπέδειξε καίπερ οὖσαν πλείω τῆς διειργούσης τὴν Βρετανικὴν. He misses the point of ἐκ μικροῦ βάθους, which means that the metal, because it lay near the surface, was worked without difficulty. The benevolence of the kindly Roman in teaching the islanders the art of navigation is delightful. Finally, why should a Roman be so anxious to serve the merchants of Marseilles?



developed this trade. The ore lay near the surface. The distance by sea was greater than that across the English Channel, but the readiness with which the tin was obtained, combined with the shorter land transit, more than compensated this. Strabo is evidently contrasting the rival tin-producing regions when he introduces the allusion to Britain, and it is equally certain that the two distances by sea which he has in mind are measured from the coast of Gaul. In the case of Britain there can be no doubt at all respecting the region from which the sea divides it, and he of course is estimating the extent of the sea which divides the tin island from land by referring to France likewise.

To refer this to the extent of sea round by the Pillars of Herakles is impossible, for the Romans already knew that route, and at the same time it would be absurd to compare in any wise so long a voyage with the short extent of sea separating Britain from the Continent. The right interpretation of this passage has some very important results. In the first place it explains why, when Strabo was writing, tin is no longer mentioned among the exports from Britain. The new development of the Spanish mines has evidently driven the British tin out of the market, as in recent times the fresh development of the most ancient source of tin, the famous mines of Malacca, the *Kastira* of the ancients, has once more driven Cornish tin out of the markets of the world.

From this achievement of Crassus and its results we can now understand in its proper light the famous expression of Pytheas, that "the northern parts of Iberia are more accessible towards Keltiké than for those who sail by the ocean". We saw above that at this time the Carthaginians had shut out the Greeks from all trade in the west of the Mediterranean. The Massaliotes had sought, about the beginning of the fourth century B.C., to make up for their losses on the coasts of Southern Spain by planting the strong colony of *Emporiæ* near the foot of the Pyrenees in the hopes of still keeping some share in the mineral

wealth of Spain. Fabulous stories are told of the richness of the silver mines worked in this region. It was natural, then, that they would seek to gain access to the famous tin region which lay beyond Lusitania, the only approach to which by sea was beset by their enemies, and the very direction of which was a secret jealously guarded by the traders of Gaddir. The statement of Pytheas now finds its full force. He found, as Publius Crassus found three centuries later, that the rich mineral regions and islands of North-Western Spain were far more accessible for the Massaliotes by a land journey across Gaul and a short sea voyage, than by the long and perilous route round by Gibraltar. His information seems to have led to no practical end. The political power of Massalia was too weak for such an enterprise, and, as we have seen above, it was not until all Gaul fell under the strong hand of Rome that the idea of Pytheas became an accomplished fact.

Having thus obtained a clear view of what was meant by Keltiké in the days of Pytheas, and having also seen reasons for regarding the tin route from Britain as passing from Corbilo on the mouth of the Loire to Narbo and Massalia, let us examine the channels by which in historical times trade passed through Gaul, and between Gaul and Britain at a later time. Transit through Gaul had great natural facilities by means of the great river-systems. Strabo (iii, 177) calls attention to the advantages thus afforded: "The whole of this region is watered by rivers, some coming down from the Alps, others from the Cevennes and Pyrenees, and part flowing into the ocean, and part into our sea. For the most they flow through plains, or through low hills, with channels between that admit of navigation; and nature has so well appointed the inter-relations of the streams that transit is possible from one sea to the other, as the merchandise has to be conveyed only for a short distance overland, and that through plains which offer no difficulty, but for the greater part of the way

X by the rivers, being conveyed up some and down others."<sup>1</sup> Diodorus (v, 27) likewise speaks of the river trade in Gaul. Such, then, being the main highways of commerce across Gaul, Strabo (iii, 199) again supplies us with explicit information regarding its connection with Britain: "There are four passages usually followed by travellers from the Continent to the island (Britain), those from the mouths of the rivers, the Rhine, the Seine, the Loire, and the Garonne. Travellers putting out from the Rhine do not sail from the very mouths, but from the Morini, who border on the Menapii; in their territory is also Ition (Grisnez), which the divine Cæsar used as the station for his fleet when crossing over to the island." From these two passages we may infer with safety that in the time of Pytheas, when Corbilo was the chief emporium in that region, that the course of trade from Massalia passed either through Narbo, in the land of the Tectosages, and down the Garonne, and by a coast voyage to the mouth of the Loire, or directly by the Loire itself to the same emporium. The more northerly route up the Rhone and down the Seine had not yet been developed, whilst with the fourth crossing-place, that from the Rhine, we have nothing to do in this investigation, as it is not likely that it ever formed a direct medium between the Mediterranean and Britain.

7 For practical purposes the remaining three passages resolve themselves into two only, as it is hardly likely that any shipmaster ever sailed boldly across from Burdigala (Bordeaux) to Britain. Mariners sailing from thence would therefore follow the same course as those starting from the Loire. It is obvious that those who started from the Seine would land in Kent. But to what point in Britain did those who set out from Armorica direct their course? Unfortunately, Strabo has not given us any account of the points on the British coast at which travellers from the Continental points landed. Cæsar (*B. G.*, v, 13) has, however, to some extent supplied this want. Speaking

<sup>1</sup> Strabo (iv, 193) gives some further details.

of the shape of Britain, he says : " The island is a natural triangle, one side of which lies opposite Gaul ; one angle, which is in the region of Cantium, at which almost all ships from Gaul put to land, faces east (*quo fere omnes ex Gallia naves appelluntur*, etc.).

By the time when Strabo wrote the tin trade had virtually ceased ; and with it all trade with Western Britain, Devon, and Cornwall, would have fallen into decay. But we may infer from Cæsar's expression, " almost all ships from Gaul", that some few ships put in at some other part of Britain. Beside the passage across the Strait, there was also that from Armorica by the Channel Islands to the south coast, and there are various considerations which will make us regard the Isle of Wight as its terminus on the English side. We saw above that Diodorus, following Posidonius, gives Ictis as the name of the island on the coast of Britain to which the tin was brought. We also found that Timæus, probably from Pytheas, gives the name of the island where the tin was produced as Mictis, or rather Pliny, in his brief fashion, gives a reference to Timæus ; for how far it represents the exact words of that author we have no means of judging. Now there can be no doubt that the Vectis (Wight) of the Romans, "Ονηκτις of Ptolemy, "Ικτις of Diodorus, are the same island, and we can hardly doubt that Pliny's Mictis refers to the same spot. (whether the initial M be a genuine form of the word as it sounded to the ear of Pytheas, or, as some have suggested, a mere scribe's blunder in the text of Pliny, the final *m* of the preceding *insulam* getting attached to the following *Ictin*.)<sup>1</sup> The similarity of form in local names is always of great weight, for the appellations of islands and rivers do not easily change. Thus, the Uxisana of Pytheas, the Uxantis of later writers, appears almost unchanged in the modern Ushant. The only difficulty in identifying Ictis with the Isle of Wight is the statement

<sup>1</sup> Such clerical blunders have given us two names of islands off our coasts—Hebrides, from older Ebrides, which was a misreading of Ebudes by Hector Boethius, and Iona, where the *n* is a mistake for *u*.

of Diodorus (*vide sup.*) that the tin was conveyed across to the island at low water. Geologists maintain that Wight could not have been joined to the mainland in historic times, hence some have identified it with St. Michael's Mount, and Mr. Elton with the Isle of Thanet, against all the evidence of nomenclature. If it was Thanet, it follows that the tin was brought overland all the way from Devon, which was both unlikely and impossible, as the great forest of Anderida stretched right from Hampshire into Kent. On the other hand, the tin island mentioned by Timæus is plainly not joined to the mainland, as the Britons sailed across in their coracles. Hence the best solution is, that Diodorus has confused the account of Ictis given by Posidonius with that of some other island off the coasts of the Channel. The phenomenon of the ocean tides was a continual source of wonder to the Greeks and Romans, who knew only the almost tideless waters of the Mediterranean.

This is certainly the simplest explanation of the difficulty. Mr. Elton, who also identifies Mictis with Thanet, is thereby involved in great difficulty, for he seems to forget that if the Britons brought the tin a six days' voyage from Cornwall to Thanet, there would be no need to bring it overland by waggons across the estuary at low water.<sup>1</sup> But where the authorities are at variance we can only employ for purpose of argument the matters in which both are agreed. In this case Diodorus and Timæus are substantially agreed that there was an island where the tin

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Elton seems to lay stress on the word *introrsum*, thinking that, as Pythias sails by the North Sea, he would mean by *introrsum* something which lay towards himself. But the reference in Lexis and Short rather points in the opposite direction, away from the point where the spectator is supposed to be. Cæsar's statement that the tin was found in the interior (*in mediterraneis regionibus*), may throw some light on it. It may be worth adding that the statement of Diodorus respecting the civilization of the people of Belerion is in favour of a trade route far more direct to the south-west than the mere intercourse with the traders in the isle of Thanet.



came to market, and that its name was Ictis or Mictis. The Isle of Wight is, after all, the most natural point to find the emporium. The tin could not be carried overland on account of the forests, and they certainly would not convey it all round the south and south-east coasts to the Straits, and then round the coast of Gaul to Corbilo, if it was at all possible to get across at a nearer point. The passage from the Isle of Wight to the Channel Islands, and thus to Armorica and Corbilo, would best attain this object. The Armorican peninsula was the home of various tribes, all most skilful mariners. The Veneti, who were the most powerful, had established a sovereignty over the sea by the time of Cæsar, and they and their allies offered to his arms the most stubborn resistance which he had met in Northern Gaul. Cæsar (iii, 8) describes them as by far the most powerful people of the coast, giving as the cause that they had a great number of ships in which they were accustomed to voyage to Britain (*quibus in Britanniam navigare consueverunt*). He describes their ships as built of solid beams of oak, fastened together with iron bolts an inch thick, with high prows and sterns to resist the violence of the seas; they had their anchors fitted with iron chains instead of ropes, and sails of hide instead of canvas. Strabo (iv, 194) follows Cæsar's account, but gives some additional details, one being suitable for our purpose: "They were ready to stop Cæsar from sailing to Britain, inasmuch as they enjoyed the trade."

We cannot doubt the capacity of these old seamen to sail to the Isle of Wight, and right along to Devon and Cornwall. There were thus two main routes to Britain, and it is probable that it was by the route from Armorica across to the Isle of Wight that Pytheas passed. For he averred that it was a voyage of some days from Keltiké to Kantion (*καὶ τὸ Κάντιον ἡμερῶν τινων πλοῦν ἀπέχειν τῆς Κελτικῆς φησι*, Strabo, i, 63). If he sailed across by the Channel Islands, and so to the Isle of Wight, and from thence coasted to

Kantion, we see a reasonable explanation of his remark on the time it took to sail thither from Keltiké.<sup>1</sup>

Such, then, are all the data which we can draw from the ancient literary sources. Let us now see if we can derive any aid towards substantiating this account, and for helping to determine the priority of either the short sea passage or the long sea passage, from the evidence afforded by the numismatic remains of the Greek cities of Massalia, Emporiæ, Rhoda, and from the Gaulish and British imitations of Greek coins.

Now, if we can trace certain well-defined coin-types along these routes from the Greek settlements into Britain, we shall obtain a substantial proof of the lines of early trade : furthermore, if we find that the types along one of those routes are prior in date to those found along the other, we must infer that the former is the more ancient. A short survey of the numismatic history of the regions referred to is here necessary. The famous Phocæan colony of Massalia was founded about 600 B.C. at the mouth of the Rhone, and in its turn it planted many colonies along the coasts of Spain, Gaul, and Liguria, the most important of which was Emporiæ (Ampurias), planted (*cir.* 400 B.C.) on the Gulf of Lyons, close to the eastern extremity of the Pyrenees. A little to the north of it lay Rhoda, a town originally (according to certain authorities) a colony from Rhodes, but which had long fallen under Phocæan influence. These were the only Greek cities in Spain which issued a coinage.

The earliest coins of Massalia, little coins of archaic appearance, have invariably the incuse square on the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Elton, having assumed that Keltiké only began on the north side of the Loire, seems to make it only comprise the Armorican peninsula, for he explains this passage to mean that "he sailed up the Channel as far as Cantion, the North Foreland, or a port in its neighbourhood". If Pythias sailed up the Strait he could not have made this statement of the distance between the opposite coasts.

reverse, but in all probability they do not date earlier than 450 B.C.

Rhoda began to coin about the beginning of the third century B.C., but soon ceased, her rival, Emporiæ, having commenced about the same time, and continued to issue coins down to Roman times. The Phœnicians of the island of Ebusus had learned the art of coining from the Greeks, as had likewise the most ancient Tyrian colony, Gaddir, the Gadeira of the Greeks. The Carthaginians do not appear to have struck money in Spain until the period of the Barcine domination.

The earliest Gaulish coins were imitations of the coins of Massalia and Rhoda. As Massalia commanded the Rhone, so we find her coins and their imitations all up the valley of the Rhone, into Helvetia, while they likewise formed the currency of Northern Italy until the Roman conquest of that region. This early coinage was entirely of silver. Sometime about 250 B.C., the powerful people of the Arverni, who had great wealth in gold, commenced a gold coinage imitated from the gold staters of Philip of Macedon, which had a head of Apollo in the obverse and a biga on the reverse. This type gradually spread northwards, becoming more barbarous as it passed from one tribe to another, until at last it crosses into Britain and became the type of the great majority of the British coins. It is obvious that if we find the imitations of the Greek cities of Massalia, Emporiæ, and Rhoda lying along in certain geographical area, and those of the Philippus type lying along another, the former must have been the first to come under Greek influence.

I shall now enumerate the chief Gaulish types, with the people who struck them, at the same time indicating the Greek original. A glance at the map will show that the earlier lie in the western, the later in the northern region. The coins of Emporiæ exhibit a great variety of types (A. Heiss, *Les Monnaies antiques de l'Espagne*, p. 93; Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 1). On some we find a horse

standing, on others a Pegasus ; on some the head of the Pegasus is fancifully formed like a little winged Eros seated in a stooping posture, with arms stretched forward, downwards (Heiss, *op. cit.*, pl. ii). Again, instead of this fanciful head, we find a genuine human head attached to the equine body, in fact, a regular Centaur. Heiss shows that of the six main types according to which he classifies them, the Gauls imitated five. But they were not satisfied with imitating individual types, but must needs blend two or more together to get new varieties of their own ; thus No. 21 is a Gaulish blending of types 1 and 2 (Heiss, p. 92).

Heiss has no doubt that the Centaur, with the addition of the drawn sword, is a development of the human-headed Pegasus, but he feels somewhat uncertain whether to regard it as struck at Emporiæ, or as a Gaulish imitation. Now all through the south and west of Gaul we find a remarkable type ; it is an anthropocephalous figure, having undoubtedly the body of a horse, but undergoing many variations amongst various tribes. Coins bearing such a type have been found at Toulouse (Tolosa), the capital of the powerful nation of the Volcæ Tectosages (Lelewel, *Type Gaulois*, c. 31), a region where we shall find likewise evidence of the influence of Rhoda ; among the Turones (Hucher, *L'Art Gaulois*, Pl. 24), Pictones (*ibid.*, Pl. 9), Namnetes (Pl. 81), Redones (Rennes, *ibid.*, Pl. 47), and all the peoples of the Armorican peninsula ; they are likewise found in the Channel Islands, and in the south and west of England, as at Portsmouth, at Mount Batten, near Plymouth, and in Devonshire (Evans, *British Coins*, p. 129).

Follow the peoples enumerated above on the map of Gaul, and we shall find them all lying in the basins of the Garonne and Loire. We find the Namnetes (whose name is preserved in *Nantes*) occupying the situation at the mouth of the Loire, where most probably stood the city of *Corbilo*, the great emporium on the ocean shore in the time of Pytheas, and whose name, perhaps, still appears in the

modern village of Couveron. From this evidence we must infer that a current of Greek influence at one time spread upward from Southern Gaul westwards to Armorica, the Channel Islands, and thence to the southern coast of Britain. This evidence, then, points unmistakably to a route direct from Armorica to the southern coast of Britain, or, in other words, supports strongly the doctrine that the Isle of Wight was the island called Ictis by Diodorus, and Mictis by Timæus, where the tin was brought by the natives.

To support the view here put forward of the spread of the anthropocephalous figure from Emporiæ through the land of the Tectosages we can adduce further numismatic evidence of a striking kind. I have already mentioned that the town of Rhoda struck coins for a short time; these bore on their reverse a conventional representation of a rose, a *type parlant* (such as is found on the coins of Rhodes, Phocæa, Melitæus), alluding to the name of the city, but perhaps a development of the incuse square, which became on the antique obols of Massalia a four-spoked wheel. The Celtiberians and Gauls imitated this type of Rhoda, and these copies are especially found in the region of Narbo (*Narbonne*), which was a chief city of the Tectosages.<sup>1</sup> This fact proves the influence exercised in this part of Gaul by the coins of the Greek cities at the foot of the Pyrenees, and adds certainty to our tracing of the spread of the man-headed horse through this region. Be it likewise borne in mind that those traders from Narbo, who were questioned by Scipio as likely to be conversant with the trade to Britain, were in all probability of the tribe of the Tectosages. Greek traders did not pass along the ancient caravan routes, but the various articles of commerce were passed on from tribe to tribe of the barbarians. Such was the case with the amber of the Baltic, such as we have

<sup>1</sup> The voided cross on the coins of the Iceni (Evans, Pl. xiv, 13) seems to come almost directly from the Gaulish imitations of the rose of Rhoda (cf. Heiss, Pl. i).



seen above has been the case in modern times in Central Asia, and such, no doubt, was the case as regards the tin trade with Britain.

But to return to our numismatic evidence. There are a great variety of symbols on the coins of Emporiæ, such as an ox-head under the horse, a star, a boar, a bird, a wreath above the horse, or a winged Victory crowning it. We find symbols similar to these on various Gaulish coins, and it is probable that they have been derived from Emporiæ. For instance, on a coin assigned to the Segusiavi we find the ox-head beneath the horse (Hucher, pl. 28); and the ox-head is likewise found on coins of the Allobroges (Hucher, pl. 88). A bird, possibly derived from the same source, appears on coins of Cenomanni, Carnuti, or Eburovices (Hucher, Pl. 71), and perhaps the star of the same city meets us on the coins of the Carnuti (Pl. 71). The boar likewise occurs on several Armorican varieties, and also in other parts of Gaul (Hucher, Pl. 81). But there is one type found in Armorica very peculiar and striking, the dancing figure seen on coins of the Namnetes and Baiocassi (Hucher, Pl. 81). Patriotic French numismatists point to this triumphantly as a specimen of independent Gallic art. But I think a comparison of these coins with the Kabeiros figure on the coins of Ebusus (Heiss, p. 44) will show that here likewise we have not a native, but an adventitious type, which travelled by way of Emporiæ, Rhoda, or Massalia, and reached Armorica by the same route as the Centaur figure. Again, the seahorse of Emporiæ is found on the coins of the Redones (*Rennes*) and the Caletes (*Caux*), whilst the cock from the same source (which has been regarded as a *type parlant*, the *gallus Gallicus*) is found also among the Caletes. The bull found on coins attributed to the Corosoppiti, an Armorican people, is probably from the coins of Massalia or Emporiæ. This evidence points out the powerful influence which the coins of Emporiæ had in Western Gaul, and substantiates the progress of the anthropo-

cephalous figure from Emporiæ through the Tectosages to Armorica, Jersey, and Southern and South-Western Britain.

Let us now turn to the course of the type copied from the gold stater of Philip of Macedon. The usual theory is that after the Gauls sacked Delphi in 279 B.C., those of them who returned home struck coins in imitation of the Philippi, great numbers of which are assumed to have been among the temple-treasure. Grave objections have been raised against this theory by Lenormant on various grounds; *e.g.*, that the Gauls who invaded Greece did not return home, but passed into Asia and settled in the country known afterwards as Galatia. Be the true story what it may, all are pretty well agreed that the striking of gold coins in imitation of this type began among the Arverni (Auvergne) about 250 B.C., for it is here that we find those copies which most closely resemble the archetype both in execution and weight (but from the first the weight is lower than that of the Greek stater). From the Arverni this type spread northwards through Central France, until it finally reaches the coast of the Channel. Here we are met by a noteworthy fact: gold coins identical in every respect are found on both sides of the Straits of Dover. This type is given by Dr. Evans among the prototypes of the British series. This descendant of the Philippus is found largely in Kent, as also sporadically in other parts of England (Evans, *Ancient British Coins*, p. 51); whilst, on the other hand, the French numismatists place them in the Gaulish series from their occurrence on the French side, as for example at Beauvais (*Bellovaci*). This numismatic evidence tallies with what we know of the political history of Northern Gaul and Britain. Cæsar (*B. G.*, ii, 4) tells us that not long before his own time (*nostra etiam memoria*) a king of the Suessiones (*Soissons*), one of the strongest of the Belgic tribes, by name Divitiacus, had been the most powerful sovereign in all Gaul, and that he held under his sway not only a great part of Northern Gaul,

but likewise of Britain. If we place the date of this monarch at about 100-90 B.C. we shall probably not be far astray. How much further back extended this kingdom of the Belgæ on both sides of the Channel we have no means of judging.

Now it would seem that the peculiar position of this kingdom, extending on both sides of the sea, affords us the best explanation of the fact that we find the same coin-type in both regions. The weights of the coin are also of importance. The earliest British coins, designated the prototypes by Dr. Evans (p. 37), usually weigh from 120 to 107 grains, and herein they coincide with the standard of the Gaulish series. But very few coins of this standard are found in Britain. There is very soon a drop to 96-90 grains, and finally to a very well-defined standard (for gold) of 84 grains. The inference to be drawn from this fact seems to be that at the time when there was the same weight as well as the same type on both sides of the Straits, there was one and the same sovereign authority on each side, or at least very close political and commercial relations. When, however, the people on the British side became independent of their Gaulish overlord, the standard dropped until it reached the point at which, under the workings of natural laws, the British gold standard was finally fixed.

We saw above that in the time of Pytheas Corbilo was the great emporium on the west coast of Gaul. By the time of Polybius, 150 B.C., its importance had waned, whilst by the time of Cæsar's conquests it must have ceased to be of any note, as he never mentions it; and Strabo, when speaking of it, seems to regard it as no longer existing. How are we to account for the 'decadence of this once important city? If the line of trade shifted from Armorica and the Isle of Wight to the short sea passage across the Straits—that is, to either of the two northern crossings mentioned by Strabo, that from the mouth of the Seine or that from the land of the Morini—as a matter of course the

importance of Corbilo as the emporium for trade with Britain would rapidly disappear.

As a matter of fact, the history of South-Eastern Britain points directly to such a shifting. It was not very long before the time of Cæsar that the Belgic tribes first established themselves in Britain. The tradition of their settlement was still fresh (Cæsar, *B. G.*, v, 12). In fact, the Belgic conquest was still in progress, for it is probable that between the time of Cæsar and that of Claudius they advanced considerably further westward. We have unfortunately no evidence to show whether these settlements had already commenced in the days of Pytheas. An obscure passage of Strabo (iv, 201) has often been cited as showing that Pytheas found the natives of Britain cultivating corn and threshing it in covered barns instead of threshing-floors, as in the South. If the passage really referred to Britain it would point almost certainly to the settlement of the Belgæ in Britain. For, according to Cæsar, it was only the newly settled Belgæ who cultivated corn, as the aborigines of the inland districts subsisted on the milk and flesh of their flocks and herds (Cæsar, *B. G.*, iv, 12). But a careful study of the passage referred to will show that it is purely gratuitous to assume it as referring to Britain. Posidonius, as we learn from Diodorus, found the Britons cultivating corn when, more than two centuries later, he visited the island. It is obvious that when the Belgic tribes crossed over and made permanent settlements on the south-east coast of Britain, that the course of trade would pass regularly from Kent into Northern France, and that the old route by Armorica, Corbilo, and the Loire would fall into disuse. Hence it is that we find from Diodorus that at the time of Posidonius the tin evidently was brought across the Straits, for he describes it as being conveyed on pack-horses a journey of thirty days across Gaul. It is obvious that the tin so conveyed was not brought by the Loire route, since in that case the distance for overland transit would have been very short.



It now only remains to see if it is possible, from the numismatic evidence, to test the view here put forward in favour of the claim of priority for the Armorican route. Taking first the question of coin-types, it is hardly probable that unless the people of the north-west of France and the Channel Islands had been already accustomed to the coin-types of Emporiæ, Rhoda, Massalia, and Ebusus, before the stater of Philip came into Gaul and became the general basis of currency of all Central and Northern Gaul and a part of Britain, and the coinage of gold came into vogue, instead of imitating the Philippus type, they would have impressed upon their coins the type derived from the anthropocephalous Pegasus of Emporiæ. On the other hand, if Massalia and Narbo had already developed a well-defined trade route into Britain up Central France and across the Straits before the incoming of the Philippus, it is hardly likely that no trace of the earlier coin-types should exist in the currency of the Belgic tribes on either side of the Straits, especially when we find on coins of the Philippus type in those parts of Gaul which came under the influence of the older Greek coinage, symbols derived therefrom, such as the boar; and when we remember the lasting impression made by the types of Massalia on the coinage of all Eastern and South-Eastern Gaul.

Next we take the weight standards. The coinage of Gaul as a whole followed the standard of Massalia, which was itself the Phocaic, the drachm at its heaviest weighing about 59 grains. Unfortunately, we cannot use this as a criterion to as full an extent as might have at first sight been expected. Though the original Philippus was of Attic standard (135 grains), from the very first moment of its imitation in Gaul its weight was reduced, the oldest Arvernian copies being about 120 grains, that is, about two Phocaic drachms. The Gauls struck quarters of their gold coins. Now in Armorica we find these small gold coins weigh 32 grains, whence M. Hucher



thought that they represented the full weight of the original stater. But this is the weight of many of the archaic coins found at Auriol, near Marseilles, and which date from 450 B.C. It is therefore more reasonable to suppose that the Armorican peoples followed the standard for their small gold pieces, which represents a far earlier borrowing from the Greeks.<sup>1</sup>

To sum up our results, we may, with a fair degree of probability, arrive at the following conclusions, amongst others, from the evidence adduced: (1) That before the time of Pytheas (*c.* 330 B.C.) there was already trade in tin between Britain and the Continent; (2) that the line along which this trade passed was from the tin region of Britain by way of the Isle of Wight, Armorica, and the city of Corbilo on the Loire, to Narbo and Massalia; (3) at a later period a second route was developed across the Straits of Dover, or by an overland transport on horses to Massalia; (4) when the Romans in the time of Cæsar discovered the short route to the tin islands off the coast of Galicia, the British tin trade almost ceased, so that when Strabo wrote (1-19 A.D.) tin was no longer exported from Britain; (5) the trade was carried on not by the Greeks directly, but by Gaulish traders; (6) that the earliest Greek influences came not directly from Massalia, but from the Greek cities of Northern Spain, whose coinage (and, by implication, their commerce and arts also) penetrated across all South-Western Gaul.

<sup>1</sup> This gold weight standard was probably native, representing, as did the gold standard of the Greeks and Italians, the value in gold of a cow. The British standard of 84 grains was probably the same in origin, gold being scarcer in Britain.

WILLIAM RIDGEWAY.

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